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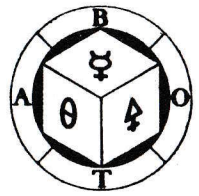
TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson No. 28



BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM

TAROT FUNDAMENTALS

Lesson Twenty-eight

THE HANGED MAN

The gallows from which the Hanged Man is suspended is shaped like a Hebrew letter Tav. Each upright line of the letter is a tree-trunk having six lopped branches. They correspond to the twelve signs of the zodiac and thus they typify the twelve astrological types of personality. In the state of mental reversal symbolized by Key 12, personal peculiarities are reduced to a minimum (the branches are lopped), and emphasis falls on the Inner Self, the true Spiritual Identity.

The correspondence of the gallows to the letter Tav takes us ahead in the Tarot series to the last Key bearing the number 21, for this Key represents the esoteric significance of Tav. In the state of Samadhi, or the suspension of **personal** consciousness, an adept in concentration becomes aware of the real nature of the universe. This is depicted by Key 21, named The World.

To reverse one's mental attitude is to have a new world-view which sees the universe as a dance of life, full of joy and freedom. Furthermore, the suspension of the Hanged Man from the letter Tav intimates that, in the state of consciousness represented here, one realizes the utter dependence of personality on the universal life. That universal life, moreover, is understood to be the perfectly adequate support of personality.

Water reverses by reflection all images thrown upon it and Key 12 is related to water. Also 12, the number of this Key, is a reversal of the number 21 which is assigned to the Key named The World about which you will learn later on in this series of lessons. This indicates that Samadhi, or that state of consciousness in which Reality is directly perceived (depicted in Key 21 as the World Dancer) is the reverse of the state of restriction or bondage depicted in Key 12.

In Samadhi, the personal vehicle is in a state of motionless trance. The physical body is cold, the heart-beat slow, and the respiration almost imperceptible. All the organic functions are in a state of suspension.

This is only the outward seeming. Interiorly, an adept in this state of consciousness experiences the bliss of union with the Central Reality of the universe. That Central Reality is a focus of intense activity, though itself at rest. Here the limitations of language force us into the use of paradox. Yet what we have said is the report of the wise who have had the experience no words can describe.

Again, the letter Tav is associated with the direction **Center**. It is said to be the Temple of Holiness which stands in the midst, supporting the six directions of space represented by the six faces of a cube as shown in the diagrams which accompany Lesson 18. Thus Key 12, showing the Hanged Man supported by a letter Tav, indicates that the state of Samadhi is one of union with the supporting Center of all things.

Mem, being one of the three Mother letters, is attributed to one of the three co-ordinate lines defining the Cube of Space. This line is the one connecting the center of the eastern face with the center of the western face.

Mem is attributed to this line because Mem is the Mother letter corresponding to the element of water. The "water" is the stream of substance which flows from the mental origins represented by the direction East and Key 3.

The **final** form of the letter Mem, used at the end of Hebrew words, is ם. In the Cube of Space, this is attributed, along with Tav, to the interior center of the cube where it is a symbol of the completion of the Great Work by the adept's conscious union with the Central Self. These two letters combined form the Hebrew noun תם, **toom**, signifying "completeness, perfection".

The stream of substance which is represented by the co-ordinate line corresponding to Mem enters into manifestation as the system of related events constituting the mechanism of the cosmos. The system thus brought into expression is symbolized in Tarot by Key 10 which represents the direction West.

Here we touch on another occult doctrine. It is often objected that the practice of concentration leading to Samadhi is a selfish procedure. Persons who labor under the impression that nobody does anything unless his muscles are involved in action sneer at the motionless recluse, seated in his retreat, and accuse him of heartless escape from the responsibilities of life.

It must be confessed that a certain type of quietist mysticism is open to this criticism. There are persons who seek escape from reality by mystic practices, just as there are other persons who try to avoid reality by rushing madly from one form of occupation to another.

A true adept is never idle, even though his body may be in a state of motionless trance. True Samadhi is union with the sustaining principle of all manifestation, and a sage in this condition is actually sharing the burden, the responsibility, and the joy of **cosmic administration**. Thus we find that to the letter Tav is attributed the Administrative Intelligence which directs and associates the motions of the planets, directing them all in their proper courses.

The legs of the Hanged Man form an inverted figure 4. This number refers to Reason. His body and arms form, with his head, an inverted triangle corresponding to the number 3. The symbolism here is a correct statement of the situation depicted.

The practices which lead to mental reversal are based on rational grasp of the principles of Reality, among them being the necessary real presence of the Universal Life of God at the center of human personality. This grasp is a reasoned consequence of the truth that God, being omnipresent, must be present at every point in space.

This realization is the result of subconscious response to the seed-idea that the Divine Presence must logically be thought of as being central in human personality. This idea is a suggestion which subconsciousness elaborates. In response to it are effected subtle physiological changes which set going the functions of the higher brain centers. Through their activity, which begins as no more than a rational grasp of the principle, there comes an ecstatic experience of the Real Presence of the I AM. To the glory of this experience every great mystic has borne witness.

The 4 over the 3 shows also the subordination of imagination to reason. Most persons permit reason to be dominated by imagination. A few have discovered that reason can determine what mental images shall occupy the field of attention. These few imagine creatively, and their imagery is governed by their mental vision of the place of human personality in the cosmic order.

Most persons merely rationalize their uncontrolled imaginations, which are at the mercy of race thought and of suggestions engendered by external appearances. Not so the adept pictured in Key 12. His subconsciousness is always under the direction of the reasoning self-consciousness. He is not the slave of moods, nor swayed by race-thought. When others are tossed about by tempests of passion, he remains unmoved. The Constituting Intelligence pictured in Tarot by the Emperor is the ruling principle in every detail of his life-experience. By clear mental vision he sees:

1. That there is only **One Power.**
2. That the **One Power** is centered everywhere.
3. That the **One Power** is therefore the central fact behind every mask of personality.
4. That, consequently, whatever is done, apparently by some human being, is really accomplished by the **One Power** which acts **through** that person and, since the same power is the energy which takes form in all the immensity of manifestation we call the "universe", it must be true that whatever seems to be done by a person is actually performed by the sum-total of cosmic forces operating by means of the personal instrument.

The Hanged Man's jacket is blue like the robe of the High Priestess. This color is attributed to the element of water. The lunar crescents forming the pockets of the coat are also related to subconsciousness because their shape is connected with the moon, attributed to the High Priestess. They are shown as pockets to emphasize the idea that subconsciousness is the container of the powers and stored-up experiences which are the equipment of personality.

These pockets, the ten buttons, and the trimming of the jacket, are of silver, the metal of the moon, to give further emphasis to the idea we have just mentioned. The ten buttons are also an allusion to the ten aspects of the Life-power which Qabalists term Sephiroth, or **numerations**. In Hebrew Wisdom, the mode of consciousness associated with the letter Mem is said to be "the source of consistency in the numerations."

The belt and trimming of the jacket suggest a combination of circle and cross with the cross uppermost. A circle surmounted by a cross is the symbol of the planet Mars. Here is a hint that what seems to be absolutely motionless suspension of activity is really a form of intense expression of force.

The radiant halo surrounding the Hanged Man's head suggests that he is an embodiment of the One Light. To carry out this suggestion, his hair is white, like the hair of the Emperor and the Hermit. This means that the Hanged Man, even though his face be young, is to be identified with the Ancient of Days.

Below his head, the ground is hollowed out, as by a watercourse. This is a further reference to the letter Mem. All that part of his head from the eyes to the top of the skull is actually below the surface of the soil from which spring the trees. Thus we are shown that his vision and his brain functions are active **below the surface.**

This is what differentiates an adept from most persons. He sees through the surface of things. He discerns laws hidden below the illusive appearances on which the unenlightened base their judgments and their actions.

The whole figure represents a pendulum at rest. Thus the tree-trunks are like the pillars of Key 2, the sphinxes of Key 7, and the pillars of the thrones of the Hierophant and Justice. The Hanged Man is unmoved. He knows that no **person** ever thinks anything, or says anything, or does anything. He knows that the **One Identity** is the only Thinker, the only Speaker, the only Actor. He realizes his union with that One, and sees that his personality is perfectly and wholly supported by the Central Principle of the universe, symbolized by the Tav-shaped gallows.

This week, use as an exercise the practice of checking your thoughts to see how many times the reversal of your first thought is more nearly in line with the teachings of Ageless Wisdom. Be on your guard against subtle rationalizations. A common form of rationalization is that which makes some course of action seem to be reasonable when in reality it is just the

opposite. An overworked example is the desire for something which reason says one should not buy. Often the rationalizer persuades himself that he cannot do without the object of his desire. Thus he places imagination above reason and deludes himself. Maintain alert watchfulness against this and other rationalizations.

KNOW THE TRUTH

Before one may arrive at ability to shape conditions round him by practical use of occult forces, he must change his viewpoint about the Life-power and about himself.

To attain to any degree of illumination, he must turn away from the materialistic concept of life. He must realize that he does not depend on money in the bank, on lands or personal possessions, or on "lucky breaks" of circumstance for his happiness and success. He must train himself to rely on invisible Spirit for his **sole** support. This takes assiduous daily practice until this mental attitude becomes subconscious second nature.

The Life-power is the basis of all forms. It is the invisible sea of perfect power and wisdom and intelligence around and within man. In all time and space there is no place where it is not. We must know that from this invisible sea of pure Spirit all things come into manifestation.

Central in every human personality is this pure, divine Essence. It is the God spark in man. A practical occultist is one who has trained himself to live from and by this hidden inner principle of perfection. Trained himself to attribute all action to **That**, and to **That** alone. Trained himself to deny every appearance to the contrary.

This training begins in the conscious mind as rational understanding of the truth that the omnipresence of Spirit means the actual, real presence of **First Cause** at the heart of every human personality. Then comes the practice of reversing common interpretations.

In the daily events of your life, watch and ponder. Take as a guiding principle that nine times out of ten what most persons believe is the exact reverse of what is true. For example, it is a prevailing belief that various substances **have** colors. The truth is that a "red" object has chemical properties which make it absorb everything but red rays from whatever light shines on it. Contrive to eliminate the red rays from the light-source and the appearance of the object will be black. So, through all our daily experience, truth reverses appearance and gives the lie to popular opinions based on the looks of things.

A practical occultist can work "miracles" because he has established himself in knowledge that the real Worker within him is Omnipotence—not his limited personality. His training does not give him powers. It enables him to become an unobstructed channel for the One Power that accomplishes everything. Because this training includes practice in rational thinking, an adept never attempts what is really impossible. Nor does he try to "work magic"

to further selfish personal ends. He has learned that there are not, nor can there ever be, any purely personal objectives or actions. For every personality is organically bound up with all other personalities and with the whole cosmic activity.

The training of a practical occultist establishes his confidence in the adequacy of the cosmic support. On that he depends utterly. Depends on it for his thoughts, as well as for things. Seeks earnestly to find the Kingdom at work within him and yields utterly to that.

In consequence, all details of his inner and outer life are harmonious and perfectly satisfactory to him. Others may count him a failure because they apply the false standards of the world. But he knows himself to be truly free, truly happy, and truly successful here, and in whatever there may be hereafter.